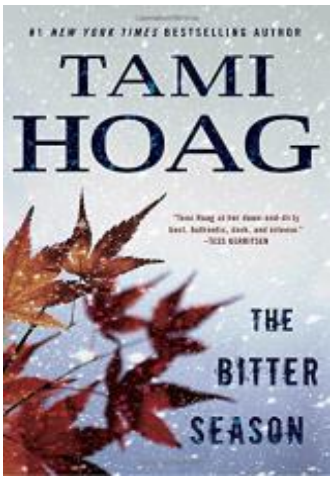
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The Bitter Season

by Tami Hoag



About the Book

#1 *New York Times* bestselling author Tami Hoag explores the devastating consequences of the secrets families keep in this powerful thriller.

As the dreary, bitter weather of late fall descends on Minneapolis, Detective Nikki Liska is restless, already bored with her new assignment to the cold case squad. She misses the rush of pulling an all-nighter and the sense of urgency of hunting a killer on the loose. Most of all she misses her old partner, Sam Kovac. Kovac is having an even harder time adjusting to Liska?s absence but is distracted from his troubles by an especially brutal double homicide: a prominent university professor and his wife, bludgeoned and hacked to death in their home with a ceremonial Japanese samurai sword. Liska?s case --- the unsolved murder of a decorated sex crimes detective --- is less of a distraction: 25 years later, there is little hope for finding the killer who got away.

Meanwhile, Minneapolis resident Evi Burke has a life she only dreamed of as a kid in and out of foster care: a beautiful home, a loving family, a fulfilling job. But a danger from her past is stalking her idyllic present, bent on destroying the perfect life she was never meant to have.

As the trails of two crimes a quarter of a century apart twist and cross, Kovac and Liska race to find answers before a killer strikes again.

Discussion Guide

1. Do you think Nikki Liska?s transfer to Cold Case changed the dynamic of her family situation? Do you think a single father would have made the same decision? Do men and women treat their jobs differently in the police department and beyond?

2. Gene Grider is a more old-school kind of cop. Have cops evolved over time? Why or why not? What is the role of police today? Is it different in small towns than in big cities? Is it different when police know the victim personally? Why do you think Grider was so attached to the Duffy family?

3. There are several families with their own struggles and secrets in THE BITTER SEASON, from the Chamberlains to the Duffys to the Nilsens. What do all of these families have in common, and how are they different in their follies, their joys and their tragedies?

4. Consider the picture the Chamberlain children painted of their family. Given that Sondra and Lucien Chamberlain were not alive to defend themselves, do you think it was an accurate portrayal? In what ways were their family unhappy? Did they deserve the punishment they received?

5. What was your first impression of the Duffy family and how did it change as you continued reading? Was their behavior justified in the end? How would you judge their moral compass?

6. What do you think of Diana and Ken Sato?s relationship? What do you think each is getting out of it? Do you think there was any genuine love or affection?

7. Adoption plays a role in THE BITTER SEASON. What are the potential emotional and mental ramifications of adoption for the birth parents, the child, and the adoptive parents?

8. What does Diana mean when she tells Charlie, ?They?re dead?. We?re free?.? And why did Charlie know that it wasn?t true?

9. What do you think of the secrets Evi keeps from her husband, and what are her reasons behind not opening up?

10. What did you think of Donald Nilsen and the choices he made? Do you think they were the right ones? Did your impression of Nilsen change at all while reading?

11. What was your first impression of Evi, and how did it change throughout the book?

12. Put yourself in Jennifer Duffy?s shoes. If you were to meet Evi in the present moment, how would you react? How would you feel?

13. The note that Evi received read, ?It all worked out for you.? Do you agree with that? Why or why not?

14. Do you think justice was served? Were the characters? lives better or worse for reopening the case?

15. Were you surprised by the ending? Why?

Author Bio

Tami Hoag is the #1 international bestselling author of more than 30 books. There are more than 40 million copies of her books in print in more than 30 languages. Renowned for combining thrilling plots with character-driven suspense, Hoag first hit the *New York Times* bestseller list with NIGHT SINS, and each of her books since has been a bestseller. She lives in California.

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